

TO THE
HONOURABLE
THE
Knights, Citizens, and Burgessees, now assembled in
PARLIAMENT.

THE HUMBLE
PROPOSITIONS

OF
WILLIAM BALL, *alias* BENNET, *Gent.*

Concerning the Forts of this King-
dome. With some other Considerations of State.



Printed Anno Domini 1641.

George Stancombe

TO THE
HONOURABLE
THE
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

THE HUMBLE
PROPOSITIONS
OF
WILLIAM BAILLIE, ESQ.
Concerning the Ports of this Kingdom
and the Improvement of the same.



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James Macmillan
at the Edinburgh Press



TO
THE RIGHT
WORSHIPFUL
M^r. SPEAKER.

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL;

YOur owne reall worth hath ever deserved those
due Respects from mee, which I have (as obli-
ged therunto) formerly tendred unto you ;
Now the eminence of your Place may command
me humble service : which (according to my ability) I shall
be ever ready (as in duty bound) to render at your pleasure.
In token whereof, I have attempted to dedicate these Pro-
positions, chiefly to your Worship, to whom they may most
fitly have Relation, as being a principall Member of the
great, and happy Representative Body of this most flouri-
shing Kingdome, now assembled in Parliament. For the
generall good, and safety whereof, I have exprest, & set

forth these, though meane, yet my well-meaning Endeavours, being ever ready to endeavour more, as my much Honoured Superiours shall please to command, and direct me, and God permit me. Whose divine Providence, and Goodnesse, I shall ever implore, for the happy successe of all publick affaires, and great Designes important to this Nation, and remains always

Your Worships

Servant to
command

WILLIAM BALL;
alias BENNET.



TO THE
HONOURABLE
THE
Knights . Citizens & and
Burgesses,
Now assembled in PARLIAMENT.

*The humble Propositions of William Ball, alias
Bennet, Gent. Concerning the Ports of this King-
dome, with some other Considerations
of STATE.*



I.
Orasmuch, as all men as well
Inferiours, as Superiours, are
by the Lawes, both of God
and Nature; as also by Con-
stitutions, *Civill, and Mili-
tary* (grounded upon Reason,
A 3 and.

and Honour) bound to conserve, as much as
 in them lyeth, their native Country; in which
 they receive the life of Men, and enjoy the liber-
 ty of Free-men; the most especiall benefits
 (speaking morally) of this *Lower world*: every one
 therefore is, not to hide his Talent in the
 ground, but liberally to proffer, for the generall
 good of his Country, what store soever he pos-
 sesseth, or enjoyeth, whether or no, it be the en-
 dowment of Nature, or Fortune: so that per-
 sons in Authority, are to procure their Coun-
 tries well-fare by their well-ordered, and dis-
 creet Commands, and Government, *Souldiers by*
their valour, and Discipline, the rich by their
wealth, learned and experienced men by their know-
ledge and observation, Inferiours by prompt obedi-
ence, all by good-will. To expose these assertions to
 approbation, I conceive no Author need to be ci-
 ted, the *Diſtamen* of reason averring them to be
 so, wherefore I cannot doubt, that much honou-
 red Superiours (to whose grave censure I sub-
 mit these my *Propositions*) will any way be offen-
 ded, that I have Dedicated to them these subse-
 quent Considerations, proceeding if not from
 sufficient reason, yet from intire good-will; so
 that if I have inserted any one clause, that may
 give the least distaste; I humbly intreat, that

— *quis enim succenset amanti?* may excuse it.

Ovid Epist. Her Helen. &c.

THE most Politicke- and martiall men have generally esteemed Forts, and strong places, the safety not onely of meane Provinces, but even of the greatest, and most puissant Kingdomes and Empires, the defects, and neglects whereof have many (too many) times beene the occasions or rather causes of most irreparable Disasters, in greate and commanding Monarchies, and Estates. The Romane Empire invaded by the *Persians*, *Saracens*, *Goths* and *Vandalls*, the Greeke Empire wholly subverted by the *Turks*; *Spain* overrunne by the *Moores* (with other Countries) were heretofore most lamentable Presidents of thraldome occasioned chiefly (according to humane principles of State) by noe having their frontiers & places of importance strongly fortified: But to instance provinces, and parts more neere, and notified unto us in these moderne times. who knoweth not! but that the small remnant of *Hungaria*, the States of *Venice* and *Holland*, the Islands of *Sicily*, *Sardinia*, *Candy* and *Malta*, I even all *Italy*, are all principally conserved (speaking of the instrumentall cause) from forreigne subjection and tyranny by fortan d strong places.

Moreover the most flourishing King-
domes and Monarchies, both Chri-
stian and Mahometan, disdain not;
but rather wholly endeavour to have the bounds
and borders of their dominions, if not extraor-
dinarily, yet sufficiently strengthened with forti-
fications and Garrisons both in peace and war:
so do the *Roman* or *German* Emperour, and
Great Turk (notwithstanding of late the ordinary
peace or Truce betweene them) keepe the one
the forts (or rather Townes) of *Kamorra*, *Rab* &c.
the other of *Strigonium*, *Buda* &c. exactly main-
tained with all necessaries; thereby wiesly pre-
venting the sudden events of war, if their ene-
mies (albeit they make shew of peace) should
upon any distast, or occasion of advantage given
them, attempt an invasion: For such places of
strength, although they are not always swords
(which sometimes they are) to cut off an enemy,
yet are they ever Bucklers to defend a Countrey,
untill such time, as either sufficient power can
be aised to expell them; or that reasonable con-
ditions be obtained, if so be that the enemy bee
not invincible in respect of number.

4. Nor can I, but commend in this point of fortifying (to omit the *Hollanders* of all our neighbor nations most carefull) the *French and Spanish*, but especially the *French*: who, although they need not greatly feare, or at leastwise tremble at any forraine Invasion from their neighbors by Sea; which could impose the yoke of sujection upon them; by reason of their great, and united Land-forces, they are able to make, to expell, and vanquish any such powers, as could by *Shipping, Gallies*, and the like, enter into their continent, yet have they on the *Levant, & great Ocean Seas*, strong townes, and Castles well furnished with good Garrisons, and necessary provision for defence, against a puissant Invader: as to begin on the *Levant in France, Tolou, Marseilles, Narbon in Spain, Barcelona, Denia, Alicante, Cartagena de Levanto, Malaga, Gibraltar, Cadiz, the Groine, St. Sebastians, Fonte-Rabia*; and againe in *France, Baion, Blois sur Garroun, Broige, Rochel quondam, Brest, St. Males, Mount St. Michael, Grandvill, Cherbourg, Havre-de Grace, Diepe, Cales, &c.* so that the consideration of these aforenamed places of importance, strongly erected, and warily kept, and repaired by those, and other our neighbouring Nations; have divers times moved me to ponder, whether their care in maintaining such Fortifications, or our confidence in omitting them, and, as it were, quitting the charge thereof, may be more commendable.

5. First, therefore (not to flatter our selves) I conceive, that it must be granted, that none of our best Sea-townes, or Castles, of *Barwick, Hull, Tarmouth,*

Harwich, Sandon, Dover, Portsmouth, plimouth, &c. are (as they now are contrived, and strengthened) to be compared with most of those in *France*, and *Spaine*, aforesaid : For although the situation of some of ours, may be as convenient as some of theirs ; yet our manner of fortifying is not to be equalized with theirs ; considering their strong walls and Parapets, *Bulwarkes, Halfe-moones, Horne-workes, Ports, Moots, Ditches, Rampiers*, and in some places *Redouts*, and *Sconces* ; as in the *Low-Countries* : and what I conceive to be more worthy of consideration, and more to be looked into ; many places of importance in this Kingdom, are in a manner without any Fortification at all, or else so weakly maintained, or ill composed, that in time of warre (*especially with the French our overseeing neighbors*) they lye greatly (according to the Nature, and martiall Discipline of these dayes) exposed to danger,

6. For to instance, *Milford Haven* is a place of that situation, and convenience ; that a great Navie, even the greatest (almost for burden, howsoever for number) may arrive there ; and being arrived, land what numbers they shall be able without any their eminent, or great danger, there being no place of strength to molest or hinder them, nor a people of any considerable power (although they want no courage) to resist them : and may not an Army out of *Spaine, or France* (now more to be thought of) not onely there land, but also there fortifie themselves, wasting, and destroying the *Countries of Pembroke-shire, Carmarden-shire, Glamorgan-shire, and Cardi-*

gar shire, before sufficient forces could be raised to resist them, and enforce them to desist? May not great powers likewise, not onely spoyle us, as before said; but also invade the heart of the Kingdome from thence, and that with much convenience to themselves, and inconvenience to us, for having so large, and safe an Haven (as is *Milford-haven*) for their fleet, if it should be by them well fortified, and kept (as that no doubt but they would doe) might they not march along the Sea Coast through the plentifull Countries of *Pembroke shire*, *Carmarden-shire*, and *Clamorgan-shire* aforesaid, and from thence into *Monmouth shire*, *Hereford shire*, and so farther according to their Potencie? Which how dangerous it might prove (God of his goodnesse defend it) not onely to the ruine of those Countries, but also disanimating of our people living in, or about them; to the incensing of *Domesticall discontented factions* (if any such should be) with other like Casualties. I leave it to the Consideration of my Superiours.

7 Moreover, not *Milford Haven* onely (lying upon large, and commodious Seas, and being likewise so situated, as that it may annoy (if once in the hands of a stranger) *Ireland*, as well as *England*, and greatly disunite them, or at leastwise molest their union; not onely that, I say, but also to omit the mouth of the River of *Carmarden*, *Swansey*, *Cardiffe*, *Newport*, and *Chepstow*, or rather the mouth of the River of *Wye* in *Monmouth-shire*, the mouth of *Severn*, *Kingrode*, *Mynhead*, and some other places in the *Severn-Sea*;

the Ile of *Sheppey* in *Kent*, the mouth of *Thames*, and *Tinmouth* Castle have need (in respect of future Casualties) to be better looked unto, and strengthened: as likewise the towns of *Poole*, *Weymouth*, and *Portland* Island in *Dorset* shire, are (in my small insight) to be farre better fortified then they are. For first, *Dorset* shire is the nearest Country unto *France* (*Kent* onely excepted) of any part of *England*; next, it is by nature least strong, as lying wholly upon the Sea, having no difficult Clifles, or Rockes to incumber an enemy in landing. Thirdly, it lyeth in the midst of the *Southerne* Coast, having Eastward *Hampshire*, *Sussex*, and *Kent*; Westward *Devonshire*, and *Cornwall*: and Northward the body of the Kingdome: so that if a potent enemy should stand there, hee might direct his forces Eastward, Westward, or Northward; according to his most advantage: as for the Castles of *Weymouth*, and *Portland* Island, they are not for strength considerable; and yet who knoweth not, but that that Island, and the land of the County, make a large Bay sufficient to containe a great Navie, where likewise they may ride at Anchor in reasonable safety, unlesse the South, or Southeast winds be extraordinarily stirring; so that, if that Island (let it seeme of what importance it please) should be but taken, and well fortified by the *French* (besides the charge and hazzard of recovering it, or blocking it up) they might shrewdly annoy us, having *Normandy* so neare.

8 And for that I have intimated the *French*, it may be thought either hate, or aversion (without fun-

fundamentall reason) if I shew not some prudent, or at leastwise, probable cause of suspicion in that Nation against us ; wherefore, I have here briefly set down the particulars, which I conceive of the *French* proceedings, and greatnesse. First, therefore it is well knowne that *France* is the greatest, most plentiful, and populous Kingdome in *Europe*, being at the least foure times bigger then *England*, and having 5 times as many people. The King thereof is now the most absolute Monarch Christian (except the great Duke of *Moscovie*, or Emperour of the *Abyssines*, whom we scarcely know) so that the King of *France*, his *Sic volumus, sic jubemus*, is in a manner a Law amongst the greatest part of his Subjects ; and thereby hee hath of late so augmented his Revenues, that those of *France* alone, exceed the Incomes of all the large Donions of *Spaine*, and *Portugall* ; or at the least wise, they equalize them : besides, *France* hath extended it selfe of late, through *Lorraine*, and in *Artois*, and *Alsatia*, Lording as it were over *Savoy*, and *Piemont*: the Marquisate of *Montferrat*, and Dutchy of *Mantua* in *Italy*, are likewise under the protection, of *France*: but that which of all things ought most to awake us, is the *French Conquest in Artois*, aforesaid, so neare unto us, and neerely concerning us, as I take it: the Proverbe is,

Tunc tua res agitur, paries cum proximus ardet.

B 3.

And

And is not our neighbors house on fire in the Provinces of *Flanders*, are not *Arras, Aircs, and Hesden* by the *French* taken in? for my part were *St. Omers, Graveling, and Dunkerk* by them likewise subdued, I should account that house burnt down to the ground; and were the *French* once but Masters of *Flanders*, I would know whether (according to reason of State) they might not overmaster us, if they should make warre upon us, as 'tis likely they would. If it should be said, and concluded, that in such Case we would, and should enter into a league both Defensive, and Offensive with the *Hollanders*; and by that meanes be enabled to oppose the *French*. To this I answer, that it is a question. First, whether, or no, the *Hollanders* would in such case breake their league defensive, and offensive which they hold with the *French*, to joyn compact with us: for it may be very likely, that they would not draw upon them, so neere, and powerfull an enemy; besides, they have of late beene ayded by the *French*, since they have in a manner been quit by us: Moreover, *France* can live of it selfe without *Holland*, but *Holland* can scarce live without *France*; as having great store of Corne, wine, and salt, and Canvas from thence: besides, 'tis very likely, that the *Hollanders* would be content to subsist, and to enrich themselves by trade (as doe the *Venetians*) and so to live at peace with their neighbors: and to say that they would joyne with us meerly for Religions sake; it may seeme so to a weake *Opiniatist*, but never to an understanding *Statist*; who well knoweth that Religion is many times the pretended, but seldome the reall

reall Cause of warre, or leagues : and as for the *Hollanders*, I am of opinion, that they will never enter into warre, or league, meerly for Religion.

9 But grant that wee should enter into such a league with the *Hollanders* ; I conceive, notwithstanding that *France* (if it had but *Flanders* added to it) would be superiour to them and us by land, & no whit inferiour by Sea ; for to say, that the French in respect of their numbers both of horse and foote, would not in such case as aforesaid, be masters of the field, were meerly to flatter our selves, and they that are masters of the *field*, will in time be masters of as many townes and forts as they can besiege, and encompassse or block up by land, if such townes cannot otherwise be succoured by Sea ; and it may be even of them also : so that the *Hollanders* having their townes and Forts taken from them, would be forced to breake their league with us, and make their peace with the French : and if it should farther be said, that in such Case, we would not onely make a league with the *Hollanders* ; but also with other Princes, and States, who should assist us. I answer, that this bare saying, or supposition, must not goe for a maxime. For first, it must be considered that, all Nations are most inclinable to them that can stand them in most stead ; now great Brittain, for that it is an Iland, can stand no Nation in any great stead, for the invasion of *France* (at leastwise by land) and that chiefly, because our shipping (if we should be masters of the Seas) could not transport over any great powers, both of horse and foot (especially of horse)

horse) to make a considerable Conquest in so large a *Continent*, as is *France*.

10 Nor is it *consequence* to say, that formerly we have made Conquests in *France*, with a small power. For 1. it must be considered, that the Nature and Discipline of warre is greatly altered. Secondly, we then had a third part of *France*, or rather more under our obedience, having not now one foote within the maine Land. Thirdly, *France* had then many *Homagers and Peeres*, that durst, were able, and did oppose the King; so that, by that meanes it was disunited; whereas now, there is none of any *Potency* that dare controle the *King*, or his commands; or if there be, yet can they not but quickly be reduced into subjection, or else expelled as Fugitives, *France* being now wholly under obedience. Fourthly, it must likewise be considered, that the *Forts, Ports, and Citadels* of *France* were not then so strong, as now they are, being now all for the Major part, re-edified according to moderne Fortification. Fifthly, the Revenues of the Crown of *France*, are far greater then ever they were, as aforesaid, the Revenues of *Normandy* alone, equalizing now the revenues antient, of the whole crown, whereby the King of *France* is inabled to leavy, and maintaine greater Armies: to all this may be added our long ease (a great Disease I feare) by which wee are of late become unexpert, to attempt any notable designs against so potent a Nation, as is *France*.

11 So that for the reasons alleadged, we can not stand other Nations in any great stead, for the Invasion of *France*; and therefore 'tis to be thought, that the
the

the German Princes, as many as can stand us in any stead, would not decline from France, which doth & may availe them (especially if the *House of Austria* fall to decay) to incline to us, who can availe them but little; and the Portugals (if they continue in a Kingdome independent from *Spaine*) will, in any occasion of great importance, either wholly devote themselves to France (for that it may assist them against the Castilians, as likewise for *Corne, Canvas, &c.*) or else the *Portugals* will remaine Newtrals: as for *Spaine* (if they should lose *Flanders*) they would find enough to doe, to keepe themselves in safety on the other side of the *Pyrenans*; and besides, they will conceive, it may be, that for as much as we never throughly assisted them in their Countries of *Flanders, &c.* that therefore they were no way obliged afterwards to ingage themselves for us; and besides (*Flanders* once lost) they were not able to doe us any great good; no more were *Italy, Denmarke, Poland, and Sædeland* in respect of their remotenesse; and it is most probable also, that those Nations would remaine as Newters betweene the French and us.

So that if France should gaine *Flanders*, and then fall out with us, 'tis to be feared, that the warre once turned upon us, would come wholly to our shares to beare, and make an end of; and in such case, I hope all will agree that it were very necessary, that all our Ports, and places of importance, were strongly fortified, and securely guarded: and surely it can not be amisse to foresee, and prevent inconveniences by

times, and indeed I conceive it now even high time to be looked unto; for albeit that the *French* have not as yet wholly subdued *Flanders*, yet are they in a reasonable forwardnesse, & possibility of gaining it but letting that passe to take the event of warre; admit now the *French* should make a peace or Truce with the *Spanish*, who (by reason of their many, and great troubles) would 'tis very propable (before all were lost in *Flanders*) be glad to embrace Peace or Truce; and forasmuch as the *French* are on the winning hand, 'tis very likely therefore, that they would capitulate for their owne advantage: let it therefore be supposed, that it should be concluded betweene the *French* and *Spanish*, in a present Truce; that neither should ayd, or assist the enemies of one another during the time of such peace or Truce; which condition I beleeve the *Spaniards* would not refuse if it were urged; because they would not have the *Portugals*, *Catalonians*, and such like aided against themselves: if therefore such Truce (as aforesaid) were made between those two *Nations*, suppose the *French* should even now turne their furies & ambition upon us, were it not then most requisite, that all our Ports, and places of Importance were securely guarded, and strongly fortified?

13. If it be said, that we would be Masters of the Sea, and by that meanes we should be able to divert any of the *French* forces, and not suffer them to land. I answer, that first it is a question whether we could master the *French* at sea, as they may be provided, and I beleeve, if the *Hollanders* (being now in a league
De-

Defensive, and offensive with them) would joynt with them, wee should bee deceived, and it would be well for us to be equall with them; but admit we should be equall, or somewhat Superiour to the *French* at sea; what great security could be built upon that: they may draw (if they finde themselves too weak) our ships of warre into one place, by daring us, and making shew of a Conflict with their ships, and yet with lesser vessels land an Army, or forces in another place, and there surprize some convenient Port, Towne, or Castle, if not sufficiently fortified, and strengthened to make resistance; and how many times have weak places bin suddainly subdued, to the great prejudice of the owners, experience hath shewed to the ruine of many; on the other side strong places (if not betrayed or most negligently kept) have many times foyled an enemy, and secured a whole Province; for no enemy (except of an investible power) will returne farre into anothers Country, leaving a strong place behind him, to which his enemies may assemble, and joyne themselves against him to make head, and if not fight with him afterwards, yet cut off his *succours*, and Convoyes, by the helpe of such a place, thereby, by little and little weakning, and disabling him. If it bee farther said, that we need not feare an *Invasion* from *France*, or any other Nation; and consequently need not erect any strong Forts, for that a puissant Army of above 20000. 30000. or 40000. at the most, cannot be by shipping transported, or landed in this *Iland*, and as for such powers our trained, or Military bands (with other forces soon

raised) would be able to overthrow them. *J answer to this*, that 'tis not good to put such a thing to hazard; for (to omit the danger of Combines, &c.) Although I grant our trained, or Military bands to be a very good meanes (I even the best we now have) to preserve us, and to suppress an enemy: yet forasmuch as they are used to fight in jest, not in earnest, they might be foyled by lesser powers of old souldiers: such as now are the French, thoroughly exercised in the warres of Germany, Italy, Spaine, and the Low-Countries: so that I conceive and couclde howsoever, that our Ports, and places of importance are (notwithstanding of our Fleet, & trained Bands) to be strongly secured.

14 It may be some will say, that there is no great feare that the French will at any time molest us: but let such give me leave to tell them, that I could wish it so, as well as they, and that all the world would, if it might be, live and continue in peace, and unity; nor doe I for my part accuse, or say, that the French will, or have an intent to make warre upon us; yet I verily beleeve, I know, that

1. *The French, in generall, envy our Kings Title to France.*

2. *That they beare unto us, old, and late Grudges for our Ile of Reys Voyage.*

3. *That they desire to be the chiefe (if they can, the sole) Regents in Christendome; and therefore seeke wholly to disinvest the house of Austria, that none should be able to oppose them.*

4. *That they have set at variance, the Princes of Germany, and fomented the warres there, to the ruine, and in a manner Desolation thereof.*

3, *That*

5. That they have seized upon the Duke of Lorraines Country, and other places not belonging to them.

6. That they have reduced Savoy into the Nature of Vassallage, and thereby opened a way into Italy.

7. That they have animated the Rebels of Catalonia, and such like.

8. That their Cardinall (who is upon the matter, their Dominus fac totum) is a most politick Prelate, &c.

Now therefore, if in zeale to my Country, I doe but suspect the worst (not inslitting upon it vehemently) I conceive, I may be by all indifferent men excused. Notwithstanding, I request all (especially my Superiours) to pardon, if I have inserted any thing amisse; hoping, that what I have written concerning Fortifications, or the Fortifying Ports, and other places of importance, will worthily be taken into consideration. For as 'tis truly said, that the Earth is

Ponderibus librata suis.

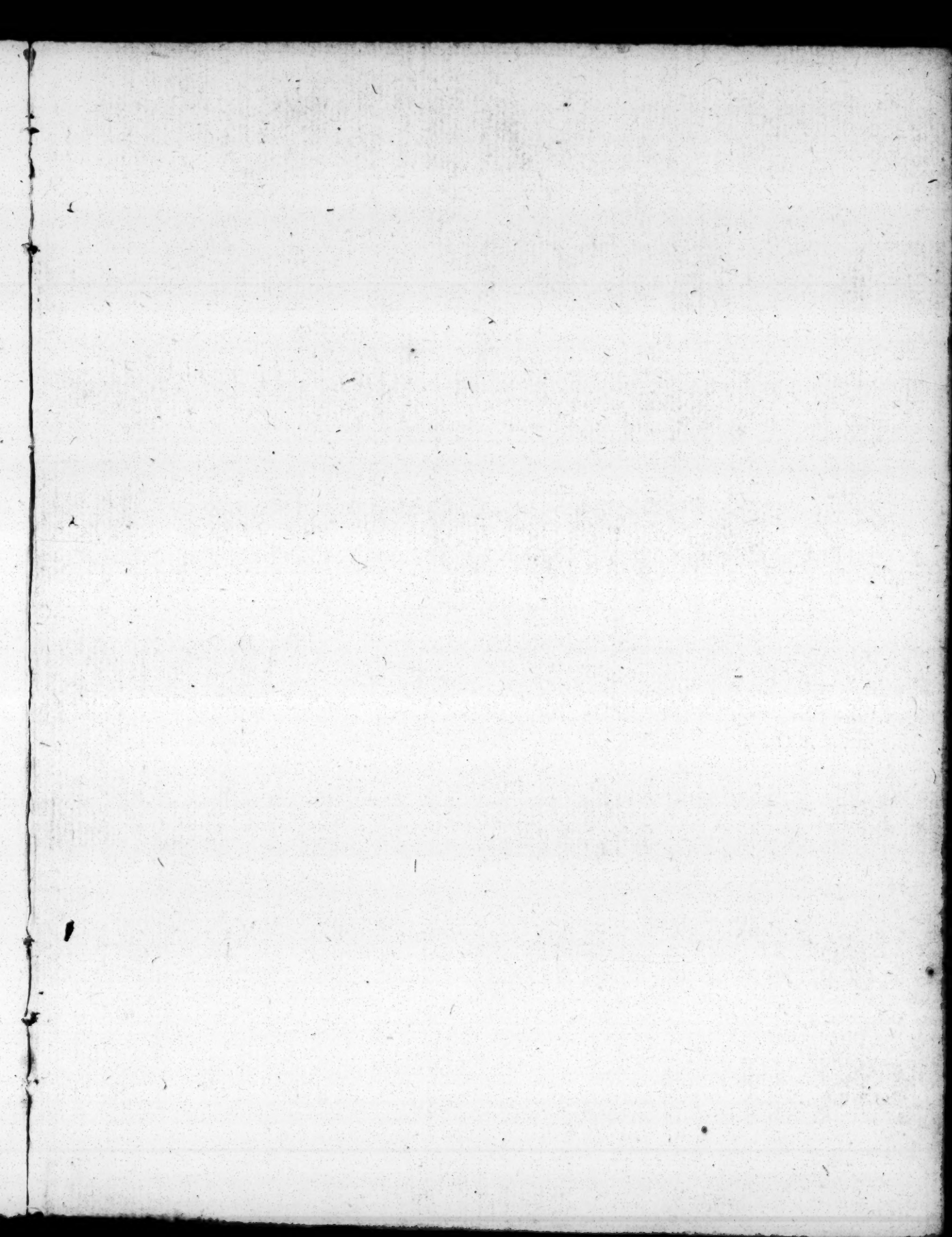
So may it be as truly said, that a Kingdome or Commonwealth is (or ought to be) by Justice, and Warlike power equally balanced.

1. **I**F it be objected, that the Fortifying, and maintaining of places of Importance will bee somewhat chargeable to the Kingdome. I answer, beeter some charge, then no security, or safety.

2. If it be objected, that Forts, and strong places, have divers times bin, and may be yet the Nests of Rebels: I answer, that such Care, Policy, and Vigilancy, may be used in placing, and displacing Governours, and Officers, as that we may bee as well secured from such dangers, as are the Spanish, Dutch, Venetian, and of late, the French, with other Nations.

3. If it be farther objected, that strong places (if once surprized by an enemy) are with greater difficulty regained, where as weaker places are soone got againe. I answer, that stronger places likewise, are better able to keepe out an enemy: so that they cannot but by more difficulty be Conquered, and weaker (if they once come into the hands of an enemy) will be by them made strong, if they intend farther to invade; so that the recovering of a weake place soone lost, may cost as deare, as of a stronger.

FINIS.



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